



**AT THE HELM**

Co-presidents Bob Vogel and Jeff Farina

**PERFORMANCE**

Added seven staff members over the last 12 months

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Scored a global assignment in the oncology space from Celgene

Tapped by Zogenix for an under-review pain-management product

Took on additional office space last year

**CHALLENGES**

Maintaining client relationships, making a relentless customer focus necessary

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 181

# Vogel Farina

Doing things their own way leads to growing popularity with clients



Visitors to the Vogel Farina web site are greeted with something that's a little different from the usual mix of links and testimonials found on a agency home page. Instead, they're faced with a standard-size web video player. When they click the play button—located underneath the image of a zipper on an indeterminate item of clothing made of red leather—garments rain down from above, as the on-screen text notes how the firm is “making dentistry sexy” as well as being “true exhibitionists when it comes to [its] work.”

The clip speaks volumes about Vogel Farina—about its cheeky sense of humor, creative ambition and inclination to do things in its own unique way. Rather than base themselves in New York City or Philadelphia, the firm has put down its roots in the quaint little hamlet of Summit, New Jersey, where it took on additional office space during the last year. And rather than trumpeting its string of new-business successes, the firm's co-presidents, Bob Vogel and Jeff Farina, emphasize the importance of maintaining a warm, open office culture.

“We've both worked for a lot of large agencies, so we've learned a lot of good things but maybe some things that we don't want to emulate,” Vogel explains. “What we've tried to do here is create a

culture where people feel they're contributing, where people feel they can move between departments within the agency.”

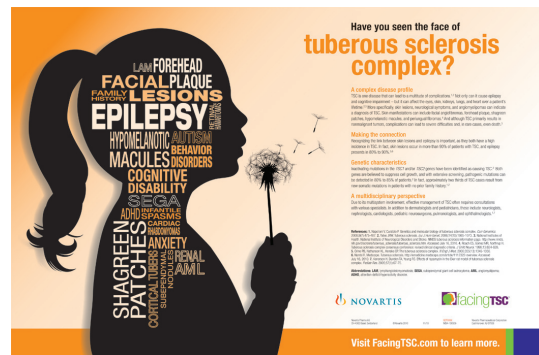
Which isn't to say that Vogel Farina is all about hugs and handshakes. The firm grew its head count over the last 12 months, adding seven staffers to run its total into the mid-40s. Vogel gently derides the notion, however, that the company could be nearing its head-count sweet spot. “What's a ‘sweet spot,’ really? It's hard to calibrate. Can you imagine telling a possible client, ‘Sorry, we're at our sweet spot, so we have to say no to your business?’” he asks, before answering, “Let's just say that we have no aspiration or vision to be a shop for 200 people, but our growth bones are not yet fused.”

Among the company's new-business successes, two stand out. Vogel Farina scored a global assignment in the oncology space from Celgene, one which cuts across multiple indications and products. The firm was also tapped by Zogenix for a still-under-FDA-review product in the area of pain-management. “We've started to diversify our base,” Farina says. “Our bread and butter has always been specialty markets and specialty brands, and I don't see that deviating. But within those areas, there are plenty of therapeutic categories that could be a nice fit for us.”

Even as the company pushes forward into those new categories, Vogel Farina plans to hew closely to what it perceives to be its greatest strength: Nurturing existing relationships. Asked to identify one or two pieces of work of which he's particularly proud, Vogel declines to single anyone or anything out.

**“There are plenty of therapeutic categories that could be a nice fit for us”**

—Jeff Farina



**A piece for Novartis Oncology (above left) and a promo leading patients to FacingTSC.com (above)**

“The answer to that question, and this will sound trite and disingenuous, is that we love all our clients,” Vogel says, punctuating the response with a laugh. But given the agency's size, and the possibility that a few poorly timed client defections could prove a major headache, Vogel notes the necessity of a relentless customer focus.

“It's never perfect, but you're always striving to do better and be better,” he says. “Every client here is essential to the success of our organization. We're not huge—when a piece of business goes away, it has a material effect—so we service the heck out of everybody. We're too small to fail.” —Larry Dobrow